



U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE TRANSMITTAL SHEET

PART 621 FW 1-3	SUBJECT Fire Management Policies and Responsibilities for Fire Management Fire Mgt Preparedness and Planning Prescribed Fire Management	RELEASE NUMBER 346
FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT Division of Refuges		DATE February 7, 2000

EXPLANATION OF MATERIAL TRANSMITTED:

These chapters describe policies, objectives, definitions, and responsibilities for fire management. They reflect changes required by 620 DM 1 and 2 and the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review Report, December 18, 1995.



DIRECTOR

FILING INSTRUCTIONS:

Remove:

621 FW 1, 04/20/95, FWM 190 (2 sheets)
621 FW 2, 04/03/95, FWM 185 (1 sheet)
621 FW 1, 06/24/94, FWM 150 (1 sheet)

Insert:

621 FW 1, 02/07/00, FWM 346 (2 sheets)
621 FW 2, 02/07/00, FWM 346 (1 sheet)
621 FW 1, 02/07/00, FWM 346 (1 sheet)

1.1 What is the purpose of this chapter? This chapter describes policies, objectives, definitions, and responsibilities for fire management on our lands.

1.2 What is our goal? The goal of wildland fire management is to plan and make decisions that help accomplish the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System. That mission is to administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and, where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans.

1.3 What is the wildland fire management policy? We base our wildland fire management policy on the Departmental Manual, 620 DM 1-2. It is our policy that:

A. Firefighter and public safety is the first priority of the Fire Management Program. With the possible exception of instances where the life of another is in jeopardy, we will not purposely expose an employee, contractor, or cooperator to life-threatening conditions or situations (see 241 FW 7). All Fire Management Plans and activities must reflect this commitment.

B. Only trained and qualified people will conduct fire management duties. Our fire management personnel will meet training and qualification standards that we establish or adopt for the position they occupy. Agency administrators will meet training standards that we establish or adopt for the position they occupy.

C. Trained and certified employees will participate in the wildland fire management program as the situation demands. Non-certified employees with operational, administrative, or other skills will support the wildland fire management program as necessary. Agency administrators are responsible and accountable, and will make employees available to participate in the wildland fire management program.

D. We will conduct fire management planning, preparedness, wildland and prescribed fire operations, monitoring, and research on an interagency basis with the involvement of all partners when appropriate.

E. An approved Fire Management Plan must be in place for all of our lands with burnable vegetation. Our Fire Management Plans must be consistent with firefighter and public safety, protection values, and land, natural, and cultural resource management plans, and must address public health issues. Our Fire Management Plans must also

address all potential wildland fire occurrences and may include the full range of appropriate management responses. The responsible agency administrator must coordinate, review, and approve Fire Management Plans to ensure consistency with approved land management plans.

F. We will integrate fire, as an ecological process, into resource management plans and activities on a landscape scale, across bureau boundaries, based upon the best available science.

G. We will use wildland fire to meet identified resource management objectives when appropriate and the Fire Management Plan contains such direction.

H. We will employ prescribed fire whenever it is an appropriate tool for managing our resources and to protect against unwanted wildland fire whenever it threatens human life, property and natural/cultural resources. Once we commit people to an incident, these human resources become the highest value we protect. If we must prioritize between property and natural/cultural resources, we will base the decision on relative protection values, commensurate with fire management costs.

I. Our Regions will provide safe, cost-effective fire management programs in support of land, natural, and cultural resource management plans through appropriate planning, staffing, training, and equipment.

J. Management actions we take on wildland fires will consider firefighter and public safety, be cost effective, consider benefits and protection values, and be consistent with natural and cultural resource objectives.

K. Refuge staffs must work with local cooperators and the public to prevent unauthorized ignition of wildland fires on our lands.

1.4 What are the authorities for wildland fire management? The following statutes authorize us and provide the means for managing wildland fires on our lands or that threaten our lands and on adjacent lands:

A. Protection Act of September 20, 1922 (42 Stat. 857; 16 U.S.C. 594) Authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to protect, from fire, lands under his/her jurisdiction and to cooperate with other Federal agencies, States, or owners of timber.

B. Economy Act of June 30, 1932 (47 Stat. 417; 31 U.S.C. 1535). Authorizes Federal agencies to enter into contracts and agreements for services with each other.

C. Reciprocal Fire Protection Act of May 27, 1955 as amended by the Wildfire Suppression Assistance Act of 1989 (69 Stat. 66, 67; 42 U.S.C. 1856a)(102 Stat. 1615). Authorizes reciprocal fire protection agreements with any fire organization for mutual aid with or without reimbursement and allows for emergency assistance in the vicinity of agency facilities in extinguishing fires when no agreement exists.

D. National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966, as amended by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 and the Refuge Recreation Act of 1962.(80 Stat. 927)(16 U.S.C. 668dd-668ee)(16 U.S.C. 460k-460k4). Governs the administration and use of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

E. Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of December 18, 1971. (88 Stat. 668; 43 U.S.C. 1601). Alaska Natives lands are to continue to receive forest fire protection from the United States at no cost until they become economically self-sufficient.

F. Disaster Relief Act of May 22, 1974. (88 Stat. 143; 42 U.S.C. 5121). Authorizes Federal agencies to assist State and local governments during emergency or major disaster by direction of the President.

G. Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of October 29, 1974 et seq. (88 Stat. 1535; 15 U.S.C. 2201) as amended. Authorizes reimbursement to State and local fire services for costs incurred in firefighting on Federal property.

H. Federal Grants and Cooperative Act of 1977. (Pub. L. 95-244, as amended by Pub. L. 97-258, September 13, 1982. 96 Stat. 1003; 31 U.S.C. 6301-6308). Eliminates unnecessary administrative requirements on recipients of Government awards by characterizing the relationship between executive agencies and contractors, States and local governments and other recipients in acquiring property and services in providing U.S. Government assistance.

I. Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of December 2, 1980. (94 Stat. 2371, 43 U.S.C. 1602-1784). Designates certain public lands in Alaska as units of the National Park National Wildlife Refuges, Wild and Scenic Rivers, National Wilderness Preservation and National Forest systems resulting in general expansion of all systems. Any contracts or agreements with the jurisdictions for fire management services listed above that were previously executed will remain valid.

J. Supplemental Appropriation Act of September 10, 1982. (96 Stat. 837). Authorizes Secretary of the Interior and

Secretary of Agriculture to enter into contracts with State and local government entities, including local fire districts, for procurement of services in presuppression, detection and suppression of fires on any unit within their jurisdiction.

K. Wildfire Suppression Assistance Act of 1989. (Pub. L. 100-428, as amended by Pub. L. 101-11, April 7, 1989). Authorizes reciprocal fire protection agreements with any fire organization for mutual aid with or without reimbursement and allows for emergency assistance in the vicinity of agency facilities in extinguishing fires when no agreement exists.

L. Departmental Manual, 620 DM 1-2, Wildland Fire Management, General Policy and Procedures; and Wildland Fire Management, General Policy and Procedures - Alaska.

1.5 Who is responsible for the fire management program?
The Secretary of the Interior has given the Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service the responsibility for the operation of the fire management program on our lands (620 DM 1.2).

A. Director. The Director has overall responsibility for our wildland fire management program and will formally evaluate all Regional fire management activities.

B. Assistant Director - Refuges and Wildlife (ARW). The Assistant Director provides leadership for the wildland fire management program through the Division of Refuges. The Division formally evaluates all Regional wildland fire management activities at least every 5 years. The Assistant Director promulgates and approves the Fire Management Handbook and other fire-related handbooks to provide guidance.

C. Service Fire Management Coordinator (SFMC). The Service Fire Management Coordinator is the Chief of the Fire Management Branch. Division of Refuges, and is our representative at the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC). The Fire Management Branch provides technical direction and coordination of fire management planning, policy development, and procedures Servicewide. The SFMC will represent us on the National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (MAC Group). The SFMC will implement the decisions of the MAC Group as they affect our areas. The decisions of the MAC Group include the prioritizing of incidents nationally and the allocation or reallocation of firefighting resources to meet national priorities.

D. Regional Director. Regional Directors are responsible for the wildland fire management program in their Region and will designate a qualified Regional Fire Management Coordinator. The Regional Director, through the Regional Fire Management Coordinator, will provide wildland fire

management program support to our lands located within their geographic Region. The Regional Director will identify and clarify the roles and responsibilities of other Regional Office staff who might provide oversight to the Fire Management Program.

E. Regional Fire Management Coordinator (RFMC). The RFMC provides coordination, training, planning, evaluation, and technical guidance for the Region and is available to provide assistance for intra-agency and interagency wildland fire management needs. The Regional Fire Management Coordinator will meet qualification requirements we establish for the position. The Regional Director provides written delegated authority to the RFMC to represent the Region on the Geographic Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (MAC Group). The RFMC is responsible for implementing the decisions of the MAC Group as they affect our areas. The decisions of the MAC Group include the prioritizing of incidents and the allocation or reallocation of firefighting resources to meet wildland fire management priorities.

F. Project Leader. Project leaders are responsible for planning and implementing an effective wildland fire management program on lands under their jurisdiction. In conjunction with fire management specialists, they determine the level of fire management effort required to meet wildland fire management objectives of each unit. Project leaders will prepare an approved Fire Management Plan for our lands under their jurisdiction. If the fire management program warrants, they will establish a position to function as the Fire Management Officer for the field office (see G below). Otherwise, they will assign the fire management responsibilities to a staff member as a collateral duty. A staff member, assigned fire management responsibilities as a collateral duty, will meet fire management qualification requirements we establish. All project leaders will make available for dispatch to off-refuge/interagency wildland and prescribed fire management operations all personnel hired in dedicated, fire-funded positions. Project leaders will meet fire management training requirements we establish for their position.

G. Fire Management Officer (FMO). We assign Fire Management Officers where an individual refuge wildland fire management program requires wildland fire management expertise. We may assign an FMO to provide wildland fire management support to a group of refuges (zone or district) when individually, each refuge does not warrant a full time FMO. FMO positions are dedicated, fire-funded positions, and are a Regional and national resource. We may call upon the FMO to assist in both intra-agency and

interagency wildland fire management needs. The Fire Management Officer will meet qualification standards we establish or adopt for the position.

1.6 What training and qualification standards exist?

A. General. We establish training and qualification standards for our firefighter, fire support, and fire management positions in wildland fire management programs through this chapter. These standards specify experience, training, and physical fitness requirements to assure a uniform level of performance. We establish training standards for Project Leaders, and Regional and National support staff who administer portions of our wildland fire management program.

(1) It is Departmental and our policy to utilize only qualified personnel who meet standards we establish or adopt for wildland fire management. Project Leaders must not dispatch unqualified personnel to wildland or prescribed fire duty.

(2) There may be occasions when unqualified personnel discover a wildland fire. When this occurs, the employee should report the fire and request assistance before taking action to suppress or slow the spread of the fire. If the fire poses an imminent threat to human life, the employee may take appropriate action to protect that life before requesting assistance. We will relieve unqualified personnel from direct on-line suppression duty or reassign them to non-fireline duty when qualified initial attack forces arrive.

B. Interagency Standards. Along with other land management agencies, we adopt the National Interagency Incident Management System (NIIMS) Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification Subsystem Guide, PMS 310-1 to identify minimum qualification standards for interagency wildland and prescribed fire operations. Departmental policy requires all our personnel engaged in interagency operations to meet these standards. PMS 310-1 contains specific guidance concerning the implementation and management of wildland and prescribed fire qualifications.

C. Service Standards. PMS 310-1 allows the establishment of standards to meet our specific needs for operations which involve only our personnel or, in some cases, local cooperators. The Fire Management Preparedness and Planning Chapter of the Fire Management Handbook identifies our standards. We establish them to respond to certain suppression and prescribed fire needs.

D. Training Standards. Training requirements to meet

firefighting position standards are in 232 FW 6.

E. Medical and Physical Fitness Standards. Current requirements with implementation direction are now in the Fire Management Handbook.

1.7 What terms need definitions? We define the terms used in this part below. The Fire Management Handbook contains these and other definitions.

A. Agency Administrator. The appropriate level manager having organizational responsibility for management of an administrative unit. It may include Director, Regional Director, Complex Manager, or Project Leader.

B. Appropriate Management Action. Specific actions we take to implement a management strategy.

C. Appropriate Management Response. Specific actions we take to respond to a wildland fire to implement protection and fire use objectives.

D. Appropriate Management Strategy. A plan or direction an agency administrator selects that guides wildland fire management actions intended to meet protection and fire use objectives.

E. Fire Management Plan. A strategic plan that defines a program to manage wildland and prescribed fires and documents the Fire Management Program in the approved land use plan. We supplement the plan with operational plans such as preparedness plans, preplanned dispatch plans, prescribed fire plans, and prevention plans.

F. Geographic Area Coordination Center. An office that coordinates the movement of resources between dispatch centers within a geographic area. Most centers are multi-agency staffed and coordinated on an interagency basis.

G. Monitoring. Periodic evaluation and documentation of a prescribed fire or wildland fire and its environment to ensure that the fire is burning within the scope of an approved Fire Management Plan.

H. Prescribed Fire. Any fire we ignite by management actions to meet specific objectives. Prior to ignition, you must complete a written Prescribed Fire Plan, meet National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) requirements, and have approval by the agency administrator. You may meet NEPA requirements at the land use or fire management planning level. Prepare an Environmental Assessment for all actions, except those covered by a categorical exclusion,

or those covered sufficiently in an earlier environmental document, or for those actions for which we will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement.

I. Prescription. Measurable criteria that guide selection of appropriate management response and action. Prescription criteria may include safety, economic, public health, environmental, geographic, administrative, social or legal considerations.

J. Preparedness. Our activities to provide a safe, efficient, and cost-effective fire management program in support of land and resource management objectives through appropriate planning and coordination.

K. Suppression Actions. A management action we intend to protect identified values from a fire, to extinguish a fire, or to alter a fire's direction of spread.

L. Wildfire. An unwanted wildland fire. We include this term only to give credence to historic fire prevention products. This is not a separate type of fire.

M. Wildland Fire. Any non-structure fire, other than prescribed fire, that occurs in the wildland.

N. Wildland Fire Management Program. The full range of activities and functions necessary for planning, preparedness, emergency suppression operations, emergency rehabilitation, and prescribed fire operations, including non-activity fuels management to reduce risks to public safety and to restore and sustain ecosystem health.

1.8 What is the Fire Management Information System (FMIS)? The Fire Management Information System (FMIS) is a Servicewide fire database that the Fire Management Branch administers. FMIS contains fire information about the following:

A. Fire Occurrence. Contains individual wildland fire and prescribed fire reports (DI-1202). Our Fire Management Handbook and Fire Management Home page contain specific information and completion instructions.

B. FIREBASE. Contains fire management budget planning and programming.

C. Incident Qualifications. Contains fire training and experience information and red card qualifications for individuals.

D. Multi-Agency Training Schedule (MATS). Contains all agencies' training scheduled for each month.

1.9 What does our Fire Management Handbook contain?

Our Fire Management Handbook provides detailed guidance on implementing Departmental and Service policy regarding the fire management program. The Handbook reflects changes in wildland fire management terminology, and implementation procedures for agency and interagency operations. It incorporates planning and program management, preparedness and planning; operational aspects of prescribed fire, prescribed fire management; operational aspects of wildland fires, wildland fire management; and fire investigation procedures and cost determination, fire trespass, into a single document.